

**From:** Charles Mehlert [mailto:mehlert@sbcglobal.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 01, 2006 6:26 PM  
**To:** MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov  
**Subject:** MLPAComments: Ano Nuevo

Chair Philip Eisenberg and  
Members of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force  
c/o California Resources Agency  
1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street #1311  
Sacramento, CA. 95814

February 28, 2006

Mr. Isenberg,

I have been following the Marine Life Protection Act process. And I have comments I would like you to take into consideration when approving the MPA Package. I am in favor of maximum protection of our coastline, and package two seems to do that. I was disappointed with package two when they negotiated too far with the special interests, but was pleased when I saw the last revision, especially around the Ano Nuevo SMR. Ano Nuevo is a unique area and needs the maximum protection the law will allow.

Perhaps I am a bit biased, because I was personally involved in the creation of Ano Nuevo State Reserve. I was the State Park Specialist who alerted the Department of the sale of the federally owned light house to a private citizen. It was sold, at auction, to the owner of Spenger's Restaurant in Berkeley. According to Frank Spenger, son of the restraunteur, his father wanted to develop the Island property into a luxury restaurant. It would have been spectacular for sure. Our plan was to preserve it, as what it was fast becoming, a breeding ground for marine pinnipeds.

The State Legislature "Memorialized Congress" that the State wanted to buy the Federal Surplus Island as required by law. We were given 90 days to comply with the conditions we were given. The conditions were designed in such a manner as to be impossible to comply. As an example we were to afford "Unlimited Access" to the Island. To overcome that we consulted with Varian Associates. A recent invention by them was an electronic device that satisfied that requirement, which the Government reluctantly accepted. This area has become an extremely unique breeding grounds for many species. It will now be protected and studied for generations to come.

The Ano Nuevo region is one of the richest areas for life and diversity on the California Coast. Its value as a natural resource is of course under battle. While it is valued among naturalists as one of the most important areas to protect, those that want to take advantage of its potential profits will fight for it as well.

Please take my comments to heart. I won the first battle to protect Ano Nuevo from commercialization. Forty years later I am certain that we are all glad that this area has become a State Park Reserve and not a restaurant. This also holds true to the water that surrounds it. Please create the Ano Nuevo SMR as written in the latest revision of package 2. In forty years from now, you will be hailed as a Hero!

Sincerely,

Charles Mehlert  
California State Parks (retired)